

January 14, 2022



Dear friends,

**Monday, January 17, 2022, we will observe Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Day across the country. It's not just a day of remembrance and reflection; it is a day of action and service. This year, the day has taken on even more importance, as the push for voting rights nationwide has been centered around Dr. King and his legacy. We have seen Republican-controlled Legislatures in a number of states take action to restrict and suppress voter participation, with an emphasis on making it harder to vote for people of color, Native Americans, those with disabilities, college students, and seniors; gerrymandering themselves into safe districts is another way they are attempting to circumvent democracy. Without Governor Evers and his veto pen, many of those same voter suppression bills would have been enacted here. In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., I hope we all do what we can to ensure that the voting rights of all Americans are protected.**

Stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

*Bob*

# small business **SPOTLIGHT**



## *Harbor Park Health and Fitness Expands its Services, Just in Time to Lose Those Holiday Pounds*

Are you one of the many who made it a New Year's resolution to get in better shape? A new facility has opened up in Kenosha with just the right services, staff and equipment to help you meet your goals. Harbor Park Health and Fitness, 3417 14th Ave., held its Grand Opening on January 8th to show off their expanded facility and new services, which include Pilates, Yoga, Dance Cardio and Piloxing, which is a combination of boxing, pilates, ballet and dance. Not only will the owners and staff at Harbor Park Health and Fitness give you a good workout, but they give back to our community, as well, like partnering with the Shalom Center for food, coat and blanket drives over the holidays. They also host fun, unique and educational activities such as a recent dodgeball tournament or an expert discussion on women's health and fitness. Give their website, <https://www.harborparkcf.com/>, and Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/Harborparkhf/>, a look for hours, classes and more.

**In Case You Missed It**



## ***Congratulations to Racine Rep. Greta Neubauer on Election as Assembly Minority Leader***

Earlier this week, Rep. Greta Neubauer of Racine assumed the office of Assembly Minority Leader, following election by her fellow Assembly Democrats in December. Rep. Neubauer will bring new ideas and a fresh perspective to the position, and she should be proud of the faith her colleagues showed in her by electing her to the role. Congratulations and best of luck to Rep. Neubauer and her staff.



## ***Federal, State Governments Increase Availability of Covid Masks, Testing as Omicron Spike Continues***

President Biden has announced that his administration will make high quality face masks available to Americans for free; that they are purchasing an additional 500,000 tests to distribute; and that the site to request free tests will be rolled out next week. Earlier in the week, the Biden administration announced a new regulation, requiring health insurance companies to cover up to eight at-home Covid tests per month. In Wisconsin, after seeing notice of a fundraiser by Dane County nonprofits to purchase N95 masks, Governor Evers provided the coalition with 200,000 masks, which the groups will now distribute for free. These are all attempts to slow the spread of the Omicron variant, which is putting a strain on healthcare systems, schools and private businesses that wasn't seen even during the November 2021 surge.

Kenosha County Public Health, the Health Equity Task Force and other partners have announced a series of Covid-19 mobile vaccination clinics. Those who get a vaccine dose at

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Toll-Free Office Hotline: 1-888-769-4724

Email: [Sen.Wirch@legis.state.wi.us](mailto:Sen.Wirch@legis.state.wi.us) • Website: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/senate/sen22/news> • Fax: (608) 267-0984  
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one of these clinics will receive a \$50 Visa gift card, while supplies last. Dates, times and locations are:

- Sunday, Jan. 16, 2-3 pm at the New Brighter Day Church
- Thursday, Jan. 20, 10-11 am at the Kenosha Senior Center
- Sunday, Jan. 23, noon-1 pm at Second Baptist Church in Kenosha

More information on Covid testing and vaccinations in Kenosha County can be found at <https://kenosha-county-covid-19-response-kenoshacounty.hub.arcgis.com/>.

In Racine, the National Guard testing site at Festival Hall has been extended to January 27. Hours will continue to be on Mondays and Thursdays from noon to 6 pm; there will be no testing on Monday, January 17, in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. The City of Racine recommends pre-registration at [register.covidconnect.wi.gov](https://register.covidconnect.wi.gov). Testing is free and open to anyone twelve months and older (minors must be accompanied by a parent or guardian), and you do not need to have symptoms to get tested.

More information on testing and vaccination in Racine can be found at <https://crchd.com/>.



## ***Senate Labor Committee Holds Hearing on Three Bills Pushed by “Anti-Vax” Community, and the Lies and Falsehoods Flew Fast and Furious***

One of the legislative committees that I serve on is the Senate Labor and Regulatory Reform Committee, chaired by Sen. Steve Nass (R-Whitewater). As a former Steel Worker and union steward, issues related to workers’ rights and protections are very important to me; I’m proud to have served on the Labor Committee for many years and to currently be the ranking member. I’ve seen a lot over the years, but in terms of misinformation, falsehoods, “fake news” and outright, anti-science lies, Tuesday’s Labor Committee hearing ranks right near the top. You may recognize Senator Nass’s name from his efforts, as co-chair of the Legislature’s Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules (JCRAR), to prevent Governor Evers and former Governor Tommy Thompson from implementing Covid prevention measures statewide and at the UW System, respectively. If so, it won’t surprise you that the three bills on Tuesday’s agenda

would all make it easier for people to refuse a Covid-19 vaccine. The first bill would allow “natural immunity” from having Covid-19 to serve as a substitute for proof of vaccination; the second would allow a person who quits or is fired for refusing to be vaccinated to collect unemployment benefits; the third would allow a person who gets vaccinated to meet an employer requirement to collect worker’s compensation if they suffer a “vaccine injury”.

Fact checkers and actual experts in medicine and science would have had a hard time keeping up with all of the false statements that were made by the bills’ authors, people testifying in support, and Republican members of the committee. One of the bills’ supporters even linked the Covid vaccine to, as he said, “internment camps and microchips”. Perhaps most unbelievable is that this hearing was originally scheduled for mid-December but had to be rescheduled because of a Covid exposure or diagnosis in Sen. Nass’s office.

This hearing was a shining example of why we are where we are as a country in regard to the spread of Covid. The prevalence of misinformation, spread far and wide by people with some of the biggest megaphones around, has created a clear division between the vaccinated and unvaccinated, the mask wearers and the non-wearers. Meanwhile, our hospitals are bursting at the seams with patients, and many are postponing elective procedures due to the strain; schools are struggling with student and employee illnesses; and more of our friends and neighbors die or are left permanently damaged every day.

You can read more about the bills and hearing [here](#).



## ***IRS: 2022 Tax Filing Season to Begin January 24***

The federal Internal Revenue Service (IRS) will start accepting income tax returns for the 2021 tax year on January 24, 2022. The deadline to submit 2021 tax returns or an extension to pay tax owed is Monday, April 18, 2022, for most taxpayers. The IRS Free File computer system will become available on January 14, allowing taxpayers to complete their returns, which will be held until they can be submitted on the 24th. Read more about the 2022 tax filing season

[here](#).

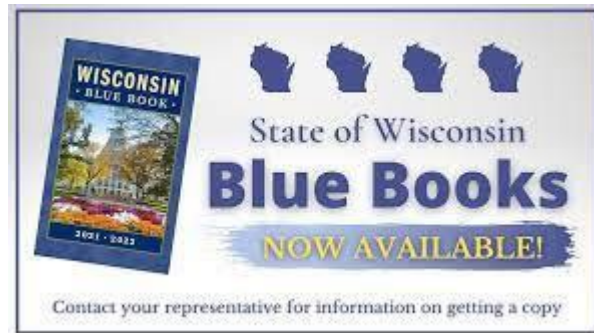
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## ***Reserve Your Copy of the 2021-2023 State of Wisconsin Blue Book***

The latest edition of the State of Wisconsin Blue Book has arrived. If you would like to have a copy sent to you, contact my office at (608)267-8979 or [sen.wirch@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:sen.wirch@legis.wisconsin.gov). These books are free and contain interesting and valuable information about our state's culture, history and government.